DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 670 FL 012 346

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TITLE Essential Components of an Exemplary Bilingual Classroom.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 12p.: Contains light print.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Check Lists: *Demonstration Programs: Elementary Education: English (Second Language): Informal Assessment: Native Language Instruction: Program Evaluation: Second Language Instruction: Spanish
IDENTIFIERS *Bilingual Programs

ABSTRACT

A checklist is presented for the evaluation of an elementary-level bilingual program for Spanish speakers. Questions for check-off cover classroom organization, teacher behavior, specifics of English and Spanish instruction, home culture instruction, teaching methods, and reclassification criteria. It is maintained that a positive response to each of the 34 questions would be indicative of an exemplary program. (JB)

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ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN EXEMPLARY BILINGUAL CLASSROOM*

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The purpose of this article is to describe components or aspects essential in a bilingual elementary classroom. The presence of all items described do not assure excellent general education, since that would require focusing on many subtle teacher-student interactions and other intangibles in the teaching process that we cannot address at this point. The components presented in the form of a checklist include items specifically relevant to bilingual instruction. Educators, researchers, and other experts in bilingual/multicultural education have identified these features as contributing to successful bilingual instruction (California State Department of Education, 1978; Fishman, 1976; Cummins, 1979).

The items in the checklist can serve to analyze the bilingual instructional program from grades K-6. However, those items pertaining to reading instruction will be useful to

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*The bulk of the work reported in this article was accomplished due to the encouragement of Olivia Martinez, San Jose Area Bilingual Consortium Director; feedback from Mary Lou Mendoza Mason, Curriculum Supervisor and Curtis Cooper, Associate Director; and over 100 teachers and aides in the San Jose Area Bilingual Consortium schools. The California State Department of Education "Bilingual Program Quality Review Instrument" (BPQRI) blazed the initial path in specifying the essential components of bilingual programs. We took that BPQRI, revised it to serve as a checklist for the teachers in the San Jose Area Bilingual Consortium, and added several other components based on our research and state and federal requirements.

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kindergarten and first-grade teachers, primarily to suggest the type of management system necessary for all students to develop their basic skills in English and the primary language rapidly and thoroughly.

We propose that a classroom is exemplary when it contains all of the features described here. Students would receive instruction based on their systematically diagnosed needs and competencies. They would move as rapidly as possible to develop the language skills crucial for success in a monolingual English classroom, mastering those skills necessary for reading in any language through their dominant language. By transferring these skills to English reading, they will master it much more rapidly than if their initial reading instruction took place in English.

During the same period, students would also receive oral language development in their second language until mastery of the critical sub-skills signaled readiness to receive reading instruction in that language.

The checklist described was developed for use in an elementary level classroom with Spanish-speaking students. Since they would receive English and Spanish instructions, mention of other languages is omitted. We also chose to avoid the use of such general terms as "home" or "primary" language because of the awkwardness of the resultant phasing. Those involved with bilingual classrooms that include languages other than Spanish can simply substitute the name of that language where we have used the word "Spanish." We recognized that several

items may be unattainable in classrooms with more esoteric (in the United States) languages such as Urdu or Korean. Those test items would pose an unreachable goal at this time, since no standardized assessment batteries are currently available for testing these skills. Likewise, we would be foolishly optimistic to expect materials such as Creole reading continuums or extensive books and reading materials in Pakistani or Quechua at this time.

Following is a checklist of essential components preceded by the instructions for those observers/interviewers who would complete the checklist.

A CHECKLIST FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS OF SPANISH/ENGLISH PROGRAMS*

The checklist is divided into items that can be observed (items 1-7) and others that can be obtained through an interview with the teacher and checking of classroom records (the remaining 34 items). Where possible, teacher comments should be supported by written records.

Instructions

1. Fill out the information required at the top of the first page--teacher and school names, grade(s) taught, and date observed. The "Time In" and "Time Out" information is particularly important to be able to explain events that may result from time of school day. "Time Observed" provides valuable information for scheduling of teacher and administrator time and providing a measure of the availability of records.

2. Observation of items 1-7 should last at least as long as indicated for each item: A Spanish language reading session should be observed in its entirety, an ESL and SSL lesson for 10 minutes each. If the observation of these areas differs from the times noted, then the actual times spent should be noted next to the item. For example, if an ESL lesson is observed for 20 minutes, that should be noted next to item #3 (write "observed 20 minutes").

3. For every item check Yes if the item was observed, No if it was missing and NC (no chance to observe) if the item was unavailable for observation or examination, or if some other factor external to the teacher and the classroom prevented the gathering of data.

4. Since bilingual education is rapidly developing and changing, some of these items are still controversial. Current or future research may indicate that some of these items are less crucial than currently supposed. Politics may render them unattainable. If you find research that supports the methods or techniques implied by these items, or if you find evidence that supports alternative methods, please send us copies of the findings so that we may disseminate the information to other teachers.

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*Four professionals were involved in the pilot testing of the checklist in the San Jose Area Bilingual Consortium classrooms. Our reliability figures ranged from .90 to .96, with a minimum of training (about five hours of discussion on the instrument and what to expect in the classrooms).

5. An instrument such as this can be easily misused. In developing this checklist, we aimed to help clarify bilingual education components so that teachers and administrators could work together to improve the bilingual program for all children in bilingual classrooms.

Class Identification

Teacher _____ Grade _____ School _____

Date _____ Observer/Interviewer _____

Time In _____ Time Out _____ Time Observed _____

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I. Observation Items

1. Are Spanish language reading sessions conducted solely in Spanish? (Observe an entire Spanish reading lesson.) Yes___ No___ NC___

2. Are a variety of materials available for Spanish reading instruction?

   a. Texts and workbooks Yes___ No___ NC___
   b. Books and magazines Yes___ No___ NC___
   c. Games and manipulatives Yes___ No___ NC___
   d. Audio-visual aids Yes___ No___ NC___

3. Is English the only language used for ESL lessons? (Observe for 10 minutes.) Yes___ No___ NC___

4. Are second language lessons conducted in groups of seven or fewer?

   a. Spanish Yes___ No___ NC___
   b. English Yes___ No___ NC___

5. Are a variety of home culture and multicultural materials available in Spanish?

   a. Textbooks and workbooks Yes___ No___ NC___
   b. Books and magazines Yes___ No___ NC___
   c. Games and manipulatives Yes___ No___ NC___
   d. Audio-visual aids Yes___ No___ NC___

6. Are a variety of materials available for Spanish math instruction?

a. Textbooks and workbooks	Yes___	No___	NC___
b. Books and magazines	Yes___	No___	NC___
c. Games and manipulatives	Yes___	No___	NC___
d. Audio-visual aids	Yes___	No___	NC___

7. Are SSL lessons conducted only in Spanish? (Observe for 10 minutes.) Yes___ No___ NC___

II. Interview and Records Checking

A. Spanish Language Instruction

1. Do records show assessment of Spanish language proficiency at least in the fall and spring? Yes___ No___ NC___

   Test Title:_____
   Percentage of class tested:_____

2. Can the teacher give at least three examples of how she/he used a Spanish language arts skills continuum for grade level? Yes___ No___ NC___

3. Does the teacher have a log of Spanish oral and written language instruction indicating at least one lesson daily for K-3, and at least twice weekly for grades 4-6? Yes___ No___ NC___

4. Does the teacher have updated (weekly) student profiles on the Spanish reading skills continuum? Yes___ No___ NC___

5. Can the teacher describe three components of the Spanish reading continuum use (i.e., a skills hierarchy, pre- and posttests, and a recordkeeping system)? Yes___ No___ NC___

6. Does the teacher's schedule show Spanish reading instruction for at least 50 minutes a day? Yes___ No___ NC___

7. Do records show at least monthly assessment for LEP/NEP students in Spanish reading instruction? Yes___ No___ NC___
Which procedure/test?
_____

B. English as a Second Language Instruction (ESL)

8. Do records show assessment of English language proficiency at least in the fall and spring? Yes___ No___ NC___

Test Title:_____
Percentage of class tested:_____

9. What method and techniques does the teacher use to teach a second language?

a. Did the teacher give at least three techniques of a second language: Repetition___; Drills: Repetition___, Minimal Pair___, Pattern Practice ___; Activities: Dialogues___, Plays___, Language Games___, Role Playing___, Other_____? Yes___ No___ NC___

b. Did the teacher give appropriate names of methods and techniques such as Audiolingual___; Direct Method ___; Total Physical Response/ Audio Motor Response____; Eclectic___; Other___? Yes___ No___ NC___

10. Does a log or schedule show daily ESL instruction for each LEP/NEP student? How many minutes?_____ Yes___ No___ NC___

11. Can the teacher describe the ESL continuum used along with an example of how each component was used? Yes___ No___ NC___

12. Does the teacher have updated (weekly) profiles for each LEP/NEP student receiving ESL instruction? Yes___ No___ NC___

13. Does the teacher have written criteria for introducing English reading to LEP/NEP students? Yes___ No___ NC___

14. Can the teacher describe the criteria used for deciding when to introduce English reading to LEP/NEP students? Yes___ No___ NC___

15. Have all LEP students placed in English reading met the criteria for English reading instruction according to test records? Yes___ No___ NC___

C. Home Culture Instruction

16. Does the teacher have at least five instructional units on the home culture? Yes___ No___ NC___

17. Do teacher records show that at least two multicultural units have been taught? Yes___ No___ NC___

    a. Can the teacher give at least two examples of activities within those multicultural units that were implemented? Yes___ No___ NC___

18. How many hours per week do records show that Hispanic community volunteers assisted in the classroom? Yes___ No___ NC___
    No Hours___; 1 to 5___; 6 to 10___; More than 10___.

19. How many Hispanic community events has the classroom participated in? Yes___ No___ NC___
    0___; 1-2___; 3 or more___.

20. How many points of interest in the Hispanic community has the class visited? Yes___ No___ NC___
None___; 1-2___; 3 or more___.

D. Mathematics Instruction

21. Does the schedule show daily math instruction in Spanish for LEP/NEP students? Yes___ No___ NC___
If no, describe how often:
_____

22. Does the teacher have a math manual in Spanish for use with the Spanish student math materials? Yes___ No___ NC___

E. Spanish as a Second Language Instruction (SSL)

23. Do records show that Fluent English Proficient (FEP) students receive at least 20 minutes a day of SSL? Yes___ No___ NC___

24. Can the teacher display guide or sequence of lessons for SSL? Yes___ No___ NC___

25. Does the teacher have written criteria for introduction of Spanish reading to FEP students? Yes___ No___ NC___

26. Can the teacher describe the criteria used for deciding when to introduce Spanish reading to FEP students? Yes___ No___ NC___

27. Have all FEP students placed in Spanish reading met the criteria for Spanish reading instruction according to test records? Yes___ No___ NC___

F. Models or Approaches

28. Please describe at least two bilingual education models or lesson delivery approaches.
1. _____
2. _____ Yes___ No___ NC___

29. Can the teacher define the following approaches?

a. Language Dominant groupings	Yes___	No___	NC___
b. Preview-Review	Yes___	No___	NC___
c. Alternate Language	Yes___	No___	NC___
d. Concurrent Method	Yes___	No___	NC___
e. Other	Yes___	No___	NC___

30. Which approaches do you use and how do you use them?

a. Language Arts			
b. Reading			
c. Math			
d. Science	Yes___	No___	NC___

G. Reclassification Criteria

31. Does the teacher have written criteria for reclassifying LEP/NEP students as FEP? Yes___ No___ NC___

32. Do the written criteria include procedures for deciding when to switch a reclassified student out of the bilingual program? Yes___ No___ NC___

33. Do the exit procedures require teacher, aide, and parent input in the decision to exit the student from the classroom? Yes___ No___ NC___

34. Do the criteria specify when, how, and who will monitor the exited student's progress in the English-only classroom? Yes___ No___ NC___

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